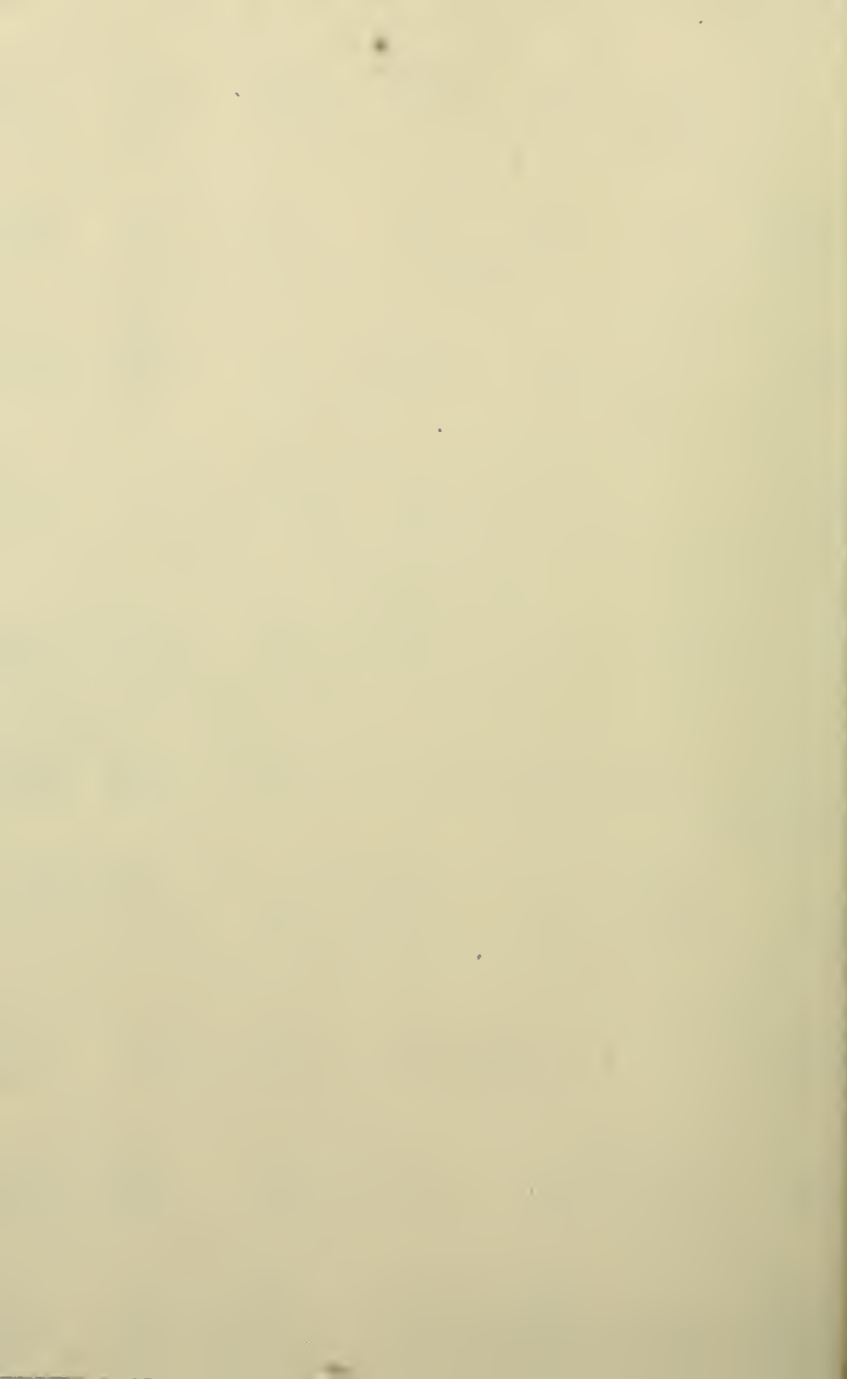


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THE GOD OF BATTLES

AND OTHER VERSES

BY

AMBROSE LEO MCGREEVY



BOSTON
SHERMAN, FRENCH & COMPANY
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TO
MY MOTHER



FOREWORD

IN solemn splendor round its arch,
Aslant on men about to die,
The lonely Sun in stately march
Moves on in glory through the sky.
Where men their battle-flags unfurl
To devastate, to slay and kill,
Where all the blood-red eddies swirl,
That same Sun flings its lustre still.

Though countless bloody wars have been
Where'er that Sun its radiance cast,
The like of this was never seen
Through all the many ages past.
But spite of war and plot and plan
That wraps this world in throes of hell,
I've written for the mind of man
The thoughts my soul has yearned to tell.

You whose hearts may often yearn
For freedom from all care,
You whose ready minds would turn
From fields of blood the nations dare,—
For you have I moulded my verse;
For you have I garnered my time;
For you do I often rehearse
That ye may find joy in my rhyme.

Lovers of justice and peace,
Men of my native land,
Blest with a holy surcease
Of war's most hideous hand,—
These my songs are for you,
You who dwell in content;
With care I've tried to be true,
With care my message is sent.



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THE GOD OF BATTLES

FOR two-score years and ten, God of Battles!
Thy people lived like men, God of Battles!
— Freed from clashing — sweet surcease —
Till we thought the world had lease
On the holy rights of peace,
God of Battles!

The nations dwelt in awe, God of Battles!
Of Thy stern and rigid law, God of Battles!
And though girded for the fight,
Still they feared the dreadful sight
Of the spread of martial blight,
God of Battles!

So they lived in dread, God of Battles!
Of the hated hoof and tread, God of Battles!
Waiting, fearing for the hour,
Trembling all — yet loath to cower
In the nations' fight for power,
God of Battles!

And now the war has come, God of Battles!
Cannon mouths no longer dumb, God of Battles!
Clank of arms and clash of steel,
Shriek of shell and thunder peal
To us the awful truth reveal,
God of Battles!

In Thee we place our trust, God of Battles!
For we know that Thou art just, God of Battles!

Lend us still Thy guiding hand,
Whether on our native strand,
Or a-march on foreign land,
God of Battles!

To Thee we lift our eyes, God of Battles!
Hoping Thou wilt hear our sighs, God of Battles!

Praying Thee to rid us well
From the terrors of battle,
Terrors that are worse than hell,
God of Battles!

Let the awful slaughter cease, God of Battles!
In Thy goodness grant us peace, God of Battles!

Back again to realms of light,
Where the ruling power is right,
Lead us gently by Thy might,
God of Battles!

We are wearied of the strife, God of Battles!
Wearied of the loss of life, God of Battles!

Let the old love rule the world,
Let the battle-flag be furled
Where the blood-red eddies swirled,
God of Battles!

THE PATHS OF GLORY

Now are the gates of right let down
While might and power rule,
And nations war on state and town
With living flesh their tool.

We hear the call of beast to beast
As Christians meet in slaughter,
In rank and file from west to east,
On land and on the water.

The armies move in phalanx fast,—
It's just the same old story
As told by men through ages past,
And called the paths of glory.

With engines of death and hurried tread
They meet in the valley of fear;
Armed to the teeth, with never a dread,
The horrible hosts draw near.

The clank of steel, the trumpet blast,
The charge on charge so fierce,—
For men must fight, the die is cast,
And men must bullets pierce.

The grave in the field, the helpless at home,—
The weak, the infirm, and the hoary,—
For few are there left of the millions to roam
Back from the paths of glory.

And this is the tale we are told again,—
It's just the same old story,—
Of the heat of the fight, and the grit of the men
Down on the paths of glory.

Gone are the lives God gave them to keep,
On those fields all red and gory,
And now forever they shall sleep
Down on the paths of glory.

Harried by the awful sight,
Tired of the story,
How men meet and how men fight
On the paths of glory:

Sickened at the fearful fray,
Wearied of the battle,
Hoping for a God to stay
The dreadful musket rattle:

In anguish, Lord, we turn to Thee
And humbly ask surcease
From hell of war on land and sea,
And grant us lasting peace.

THE BUGLE CALL

O BERTHA, dear! I hear the bugle calling!
And I must leave thee, hard as it may seem,
For the awful land where battle clouds are rolling
And thousands sink in death's eternal dream.

The enemy has sworn against our nation!
Again I hear the hated hoof and tread!
And I am bound in honor to my station
At the front, beneath the cannonading dread.

O Heart! Sweetheart! Of thee I'll still be dreaming
In the camp and in the hurried battle dash,
Where our nation's flag in freedom shall be streaming
'Mid the cannon smoke and thunder of the clash.

And when the haughty foe shall sound retreat,
And sea and land no more incarnadine,
I hope, Sweetheart, that we again shall meet
At home beneath the clinging-ivy vine.

Then farewell, Bertha dear! The bugle's calling,
And I must leave thee, hard as it may seem,
For the awful land where battle clouds are rolling
And thousands sink in death's eternal dream.

THE STRUGGLE

IN the whirl of kings' ambitions
That speak of pomp and power,
The nations rise like giants,
For fate has knelled the hour
When men must move in armies
O'er fields all red and gory,
To slay and kill their fellowman,—
And call it paths of glory.

I see a million men and more
Go by in measured tread,
To fight where countless thousands
Shall muster with the dead.
Again I hear the battle-roar,—
Oft told in song and story,—
Where armed men in conflict meet
Upon the paths of glory.

We know not, Lord, whom we should blame
For war's unholy work,
But Thou, we know, art still the same,
And we should ne'er Thy mandates shirk.
"Thou shalt not kill," was said of old,—
So runs Thy life's sweet story,—
And war is wrong, though nations bold
Clash on the paths of glory.

IN BELGIUM BY THE SEA

IN Belgium by the sea
Where nations disagree,
Millions meet for slaughter!
Blood! It flows like running water
In Belgium by the sea
Where nations disagree!

See the millions! How they muster!
Round their leaders still they cluster
Like the fiends of hell consulting,
In satanic brawl exulting!
See the millions! How they muster!
Round their leaders still they cluster!

Rifle crack and cannon thunder
Rend the peaceful sky asunder!
Bayonet charge and clash of sabre
Face to face in hellish labor!
Rifle crack and cannon thunder
Rend the peaceful sky asunder!

See the rotting corpse a-yonder,
While this hell-on-earth ye ponder!
Reeking forms and stench of death
Breathe ye in with every breath!
See the rotting corpse a-yonder,
While this hell-on-earth ye ponder!

Of the horror, fear, and terror
Words can never be the bearer!
Hated scenes, begot of hell,
Human tongue can never tell!
Of the horror fear and terror
Words can never be the bearer!

.

Would that the Lord
Might shatter the sword!
Would that grim war
We should see nevermore!
Would that the Lord
Might shatter the sword!

TO THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

(Respectfully dedicated)

THE nations lost their dignity
In heated furor of the time —
To heights of power they would climb,
While thou art in benignity.

The jealous eye, the envious thought,
Have moved the nations on to war,
Lo! bursts aloud the cannon's roar,
For might and power they have sought.

But thou, my own United States,
Hast held the pace and kept thy head
Though mourning for the lost and dead,
So tranquil 'mid thy hills and lakes.

Thou guardest well the public weal
In spite of scheme and plot and plan
Attempted by the hand of man,
While on the Truth is fixed thy seal.

Thy people live in glory still,
While millions move in armies vast
'Mid thunder roar and battle blast,
For peace has ever been thy will.

Still blest are we in those who hold
The reins of power in the land;
Who by the Truth in glory stand
With courage seldom ever told.

Then haste, true nation, on thy way,
And heed no coward's sneer or frown,
For thou art given to wear the crown
Of glory in a brighter day.

BALLAD OF THE SCHOOLMASTER

No captain of commerce,
Nor builder am I
Of structures in matter
That reach to the sky.

No call of genius
Ambitions me on
To fame and fortune
Where others have gone;

Nor rapt me and thrilled me
And signaled to me
The hint of success
From life's stormy sea.

The world with its glitter
Might offer me more,
Did I only forsake
Mediocrity's shore.

I'm only a schoolmaster
Hidden to fame;
The world never even
Heard tell of my name.

I sing this mean song
For amusement of men,
To tell of a life
Beyond their own ken.

My rôle is not one
Enticing to man
Who seeks only fame
Wherever he can,

For I'm not a leader
Nor star on the stage
Of life, where all men
Must work for a wage.

My part is obscure
And removed from the crowd,
Which never appeals
To the lofty and proud.

Obscure though my life,
Unknown though my name,
I start not a few
On the pathway to fame.

Then give me your sons
While I fashion and form
Their hearts and their minds
To brave every storm.

I'll make them all men
Though it costs my whole life,
And men they shall be
In the midst of the strife.

O God, what a life!
To make but one man
Like unto Thee
The best that I can!

Then fame shall not tempt me
Nor call me away,
But at this great work
To the end I shall stay,

While comfort and solace
Alone shall be sought,
In thought of the men
Whom erstwhile I taught.

THE SEQUENCE

HE

Give me a word to rhyme with hope,
And I shall build for thee
A castle of love that's able to cope
With every gale on life's stormy sea.

SHE

Give me a word to rhyme with faith
And of myself I'll make
A temple firm, with love's bright wreath
Entwined thereon for thine own sake.

THEY

Give us a word to rhyme with love,
And free we'll be from strife,
While blest with smiles from God above
We'll go hand in hand through life.

SATAN

Give me a word to rhyme with doubt,
And a hell their life I'll make;
Their love's young dreams I'll put to rout
And their plighted troth I'll break.

THE SONG OF THE AGE

A YOUTH there stood at the break of day
And gazed on fields afar,
Where he read by the light of the morning ray
The promise of things that are.
He had just set forth from the scenes of a child
And sought for the things of a man,
While the flimsy flights of his fancies wild
In the paths of the dreamers ran.

Poorly girt for the combat,
Fresh from environs of home,
Not taking the world as he found it,
But longing with strangers to roam,—
He stood in doubt at the threshold
Where the actors must enter the stage,
And hearkened to that song of old,
The siren song of the age.

Sung with allurements of Satan,
Strong with the power to charm
Till the will of the hearer was beaten
And the victim was buried in harm.
This is the song that was sung to him
At the dawn of his manhood's might,
That made the laws of his code grow dim
And led him from paths of right.

“ Abandon your traditions old!
Be up and on with the tide
That sweeps one out to deeds untold,
And I will be your guide!
Fear not, for I bring a newer life
To the actors on the stage,
And all the world with dancing’s rife
While I sing the song of the age!

“ Dancing, drinking, and dreaming,—
Women and cards and song!
Pleasures and passions are streaming
Down the avenues of wrong! —
Cast aside your old worn creed,
And never your passions gauge,
But seek only joy in the present deed
And sing the song of the age!

“ Long ye have lived in the far dead past,
Ye have knelt to the God of Fear:
Now come with me and give what thou hast
To the God of Pleasure so near! —
Heed not the words of the worn and old,
The wretched, the low, the uncouth;
Follow me on; be brave and be bold;
For I sing but the song of thy youth!

“ And the song of thy youth is the song of the
age
Wherein only dreamers live;
Then dream your dreams on the world’s wide
stage
And the best that is in ye give
To Matter, the only God of Things,
The power that rules the world
Where the wise man ever my sweet song sings
’Neath the flag of the age unfurled! ”

And this was the song the young man heard,—
The siren song of the age,—
The which he pondered word for word
As he entered the world’s great stage,
Pondered o’er, and chose his rôle
And played his part for a while,
But failed to reach the promised goal
In his march down pleasure’s aisle.

The tale of his life I need not repeat,
’Tis one of abasement and shame,
Flung back with a curse from the judgment seat
Where boots nor fortune nor fame.
He’s only one of the millions lost
Through hearing the siren song;
His troubled soul on the breakers was tossed
With those of the countless throng.

Then close up the book of his unfinished task;
There's another lost soul to inscribe.
The Devil grins 'neath his Devil's Mask,
As he rules his hellish tribe.
Another heart has been hurled to hell
To fret on *its* stage for aye;
From weakness of will he was caught in the
spell
Of the siren song of To-day.

IF YOUR SINS BE AS RED AS SCARLET

“If your sins be as red as scarlet,
I will make them whiter than snow,”
Said the writer by God inspired
To our fathers long ago;

And that same God of mercy
Sent His only begotten Son
That the souls of men unnumbered
Might from death be won;

While those to sin addicted,
Entwined by the Serpent's coils,
Shall in His grace find freedom
From Satan's terrible toils.

His life was a boon to sinners;
He moved among men of this world,
And preached His lofty ideals —
His Gospel banner unfurled.

Son of God and God also,
Christ, the anointed of old,
Slain by the sins of the millions,
For paltry silver sold:

We know it was Thou who said it
To our fathers long ago,—
“If your sins be as red as scarlet,
I will make them more white than snow.”

THE METAMORPHOSIS OF A PAL

His name was Timmy Ronan: he was just a
pal of mine
In the home town way out west among the hills,
Where we used to spend our time running round
with hook and line
When we went so blythe, a-fishing in the rills.

Two barefoot boys we were, together round
the town,
In the summer when the days were long and
fair.
I was much like Tim in action, and Tim was like
a clown,
And our antics often made the good folks stare.
Oh, those days away out west, where the folks
were of the best
That I've ever seen since eastward I have come,
Where they'd work throughout the day, and at
evening take their rest,
Far removed from dissipation's city-slum.

Ah, well do I remember the day I left the town
For the east, and all the big things I would do,
How my little saddened Timmy wore upon his
face a frown
As he walked me to the train about to go.
Then a hand-clasp and a grunt, and I left him
there behind,

All alone beneath the home town's old train
shed,
With the hope down in my breast that another
pal I'd find
Who would help me in the race to go ahead.

But the course was long and fast, and I often
lost the pace,
When the morals of my hometown training
stood
In the way of wanton beckoning, to check me in
the race,
When by smothering my conscience I could have
it if I would.
But by patience and endeavor I landed at the
top
With the good things of success at my com-
mand,
While the past associations from my mind began
to drop
As with the men of grit I took my stand.

It was just the other day, as I wandered down
the street
That leads one to the wharf beside the sea,
When a-coming with the wind whom should I
hap to meet
But my Timmy pal, a-staring still at me.
He was dirty, coarse and awful; he was ragged
and half drunk;

And of all the things I've seen he was a "sight,"
For as he came up near, his reeking breath
 it stunk —
Fell symptom of a youth's untimely blight.

As I took him by the hand, I could see the
 flush of shame
A-spreading o'er the face I knew so well,
And I tried to make him think that things were
 just the same
As when we ran, two boys, through hill and dell.
But with laboring and effort he told to me his
 tale
Of how he'd left the home town long ago,
How he'd traveled through the land on foot
 — perchance by rail —
And companions led him into ways of woe.

So I offered him my aid if he'd only stay
 around,
But he couldn't stay, he just the same as said,
For he had the roving fever and to stranger
 scenes was bound;
And as to past relations, he might just as well
 be dead.
Then he left me there alone, and he sadly went
 his way
With a choking in his throat that I could see;

Bound for God knows only where, I'm sure I
couldn't say,
For the only thing he left me was a saddened
memory.

Though he's gone from out my life, I hope
we'll meet again
On that farther shore where life is sweet and
true,
And my little Timmy pal once again will mix
with men,
With forgetfulness of all that's drear and blue.
I hope it shall be so, for we'll be boys together
then,
Just as we were back home in days of yore,
And with boyhood's sweet abandon we'll just be
pals again
To play forever on the eternal shore.

STAR OF MEMORY

THROUGH the dark night
Alone I went,
While with deep sorrow
My soul was bent,

When from the inky black
Flashed there a star,
Just like a messenger
Come from afar.

Glittering, glimmering,
It shone so bright;
Glowing and shimmering,
It dazzled my sight,

Calling me back again
From black despair,
Lighting me onward
With heavenly glare.

Back from despondency
This ray divine
Happily called me
To things sublime;

Singing sweet solace
And cheering me on
With sweetest comfort
Till my grief was gone.

What was this ray of hope
Sent from afar,
Flashed through the night to me
Just like a star?

Was it a memory
Come through the years,
Vivid and forceful,
Dispelling my fears?

Was it a messenger
Come from on high,
Bearing most sweetly
Response to my sigh?

It was remembrance
Of one most dear,
With words she uttered
When she was near.

Words of a mother
To her lonely son,
Guiding him onward
Till his work is done.

As garnered treasure
They are to me,
Come in with the tide
From memory's sea,

Bringing me courage
When most in need;
Aiding my will
In each virtuous deed.

Now I am strong;
Dispelled are my fears;
Hope shall abide with me
Through the long years.

Though dark the night may be,
Still from afar
It shall be flashed to me
Just like a star.

IN CHATFIELD TOWN

IN Chatfield Town in Southern Minnesota,
Where the farmers come to sell their hogs and
grain,
There's a lad I know, both good and true by
nature,
And to him I dedicate this brief refrain.

Born and bred out there 'mid the waving corn-
fields,
He never had a yearning for the town,
For he'd rather be a farmer in the country
Than become a mighty man of great renown.

He'd rather ride a binder than a Packard
And spend his life a-tilling of the soil
Than be mixed up with the din and roar of cities
And pass his years in dreary drudge and toil.

So when his father sent him off to college
To get a little knowledge in his head,
He went with heavy heart yet like a soldier
To be mustered in the army of the dead.

Back again he came from school, when school was
over,
And gladly took his place upon the farm,
For to him, in spite of glim and glare of city,
A living in the country bore a charm.

To be a soldier in the army of producers
He made the end and be-all of his life,
And thus by giving up what most men cherish
He won desired freedom without strife.

It was there in Minnesota that I knew him,
Where wave the fragrant fields I love the
best,
And as I think of him I have a longing
To be out there to-night just as his guest.

I know that I'd not find him artificial,
But just as God intended him to be,
And to one so awful sick of frill and fashion
What a healthy and a welcome sight to see!

And though I cannot be with him this evening,
I'll drink his health in liquid pure and cold,
Recall his bright and ever cheering features
And converse with him on topics as of old.

Then here's to you, my old-time pal of Chat-
field,
The greatest friend I've met on this round
earth;
With joy and pleasant thoughts to-night I
crown you
A nobleman in calling and by birth.

WITHIN THE TOWN OF BALTIMORE

With weary mind and body sore,
I wandered round from door to door
To find a friend I knew of yore,
And ponder o'er forgotten lore
Within the town of Baltimore.

From Druid Hill to Chesapeake shore,
Through crowded street and busy roar,
All wearied with my hopeless chore,
I sought in vain this friend of yore
Within the town of Baltimore:

And as I passed along, so sore,
All streaked with dirt and dust galore,
My heart within me yearned to soar
To childhood with my friend of yore
Within the town of Baltimore,

Till at my heart suspicion tore
And whispered softly o'er and o'er,
While to my mind in truth it bore
That I should see him nevermore
Within the town of Baltimore.

From out the past of memory's store,
A friend he must have known of yore,
Informed me gently o'er and o'er
That he is dead forevermore
Within the town of Baltimore.

So he shall dwell forevermore
Where disembodied spirits soar,
And I shall see him nevermore,—
This friend I knew and loved of yore,—
Within the town of Baltimore.

GOING HOME

I LOVE a state of the golden west,
Oh, Iowa's beautiful plain!
Of the lands I have met, to me it's the best,
And I long to be there again.

I've wandered far in foreign land,
I've seen and heard strange things,
Where countless old traditions stand
And the voice of history rings.

I'm going back again to-night
With never a thought to roam,
Back again to a grander sight,—
To the land I call my home.

It's lying there in the heart of the west
Where tasseled cornfields blow,
And soon I'll be its welcome guest
From its boundaries never to go.

Oh, is there a thought in the wide, wide
world? —

If there is, pray tell me one,—
Where the spirit of man by God was hurled
And his earthly course is run,

That brings more joy to the human heart
Than the sight of the land of one's birth
On coming back from foreign mart,
Back from the ends of the earth?

THE HEART OF MAN

THE human heart was made to love and breathe
of things divine,
And men of worth since time began have seldom
crossed the line
That separates the good from bad and marks
the love from hate
But by the light of reason for the good things
will to wait.

Hate must have been a spirit come from the
nether world
To reek and rot the heart of man here where
man was hurled,
For that spirit of the darkness or demon of the
sea
Has wrecked the countless souls of men that
evil will to be.

Then love is life's salvation, entrancer of the
soul,
The leader of the heart of man unto his final
goal,
The essence of man's living, the spice of things
worth while,
The light dispelling darkness, the bloom that
knows no guile.

THE BOY

HE was Master Clemmie Bowe,
And he didn't care to go
With the proud among the fields of wise pre-
tense.

He never tried to soar
With the great and mighty, for
He was just a boy.

As a little lad he came,
And he spoke to me his name
While I wandered down the street beside the
school.

In his face there was no guile
For I studied him the while,—
He was just a boy.

Perhaps there may be here,
Thought I while he was near,
The makings of a man of might and fame.
I surely hope it's so,
For I feel it should be, though
He was just a boy.

SPIRIT OF THE ROCKIES

I've stood in some lonely valley
 'Mid the mountains of the west ;
I've felt my spirits rally
 To see nature at its best.
I've watched the glistening snow peaks
 Glaring out beneath the sun,
And heard the tale the wind shrieks
 Down its drear and lonely run.

I've felt the solemn spirit of the wild
 Seize and grasp me in its mighty clutch,
Helpless, silent, spellbound as a child,
 When I stood within the Rockies' magic
 touch.
Rock-ribbed giants older than our history,
 Tales so wild and weird could ye not tell ;
Tranquil, silent, dumb, within your mystery,
 Enraptured, awed, I stand beneath your spell.

For ages ye arose to meet the morning ;
 For ages ye were kissed by parting day ;
With Time has combated your self-adorning,
 And garnered sterner beauty from the fray ;
Till at the present time ye stand in splendor,
 And shall continue so unto the end
As down the course of time your tale ye render,
 And message to the generations send.

I'm sick to death of life so artificial
Where the city wraps me in its dizzy roar ;
I'm wearied of these things so superficial ;
I'm yearning for the mountains as of yore.
I want the deep and silent, lonely valley ;
I want to see the snow caps high above ;
I want to feel my drooping spirits rally
Where the giants high aloft their bare fangs
shove.

IN THE FOREST OF THE MOUNTAINS

IN the forest of the mountains
Where the tamarack and fir
Rise to shadow bubbling fountains
And with gentle breezes stir;
'Mid the golden light of morning
Gilding all the world with grace,
Nature is herself adorning
With allurements for our race;

By the silver shining lakes
Where the brooklets hie them to,
And the mind in joy awakes
To the glorious morning hue;
By the winding of a river
That flows to meet the sea —
Sinuous from Nature's quiver,—
It is there I long to be:

Far away from city roar
And from feverish city strife,
There in gladness I would soar
To a sweet and happy life;
Finding joy among the mountains
And within the valleys deep,
Drinking at the bubbling fountains,
There by nature sung to sleep!

There's a peace and plenty found
That this world can never give;
Freed from all discordant sound,
There in gladness I would live,
And among the whispering trees
Live as nature's bosom friend,
Breathing in the mountain breeze,—
Dwell where truth and beauty blend.

ARISE! THE DAY IS DAWNING

ARISE! The day is dawning;
All nature, glittering bright,
Rolls back the night's black awning,
Lets in the morning light.
The cocks are all a-crowing
And sheep in pasture graze,
For all the world's a-growing
With the passing of the days,—
Growing old and older,
And wiser, let us pray,
As generations bolder
Make appearance for the day.

Arise! The day is dawning,
And sleep no more to-day;
The sky her stars is pawning
For the brightest morning ray.
The night without travailing
To new life has given birth
That soon shall be prevailing
To the very ends of earth.
There's a beauty in the morning
Which ye should not then forego,
There's the Orient's self-adorning,
Pearly mist and ruby glow.

Arise! The day is dawning;
And see the sights I see
For nature's now a-spawning
Many things unknown to thee.
— I see the brooklet sally
Where water-lilies be,
Then bicker down the valley
To the wideness of the sea.
Then wake ye now, and swiftly rise
At stroke of Nature's warning,
To come with me and lift your eyes
To the majesty of morning.

FALSE GODS

A COPPER sunset gilds a western sky, and twilight's hailing from the east,
A world is steeped in quiet and the song of the bird has ceased;
In the darkening gloom of nightfall to me there comes the thought
Of the years gone by and the years to come, and the many things I've sought.

The tide of my youth has been folly; false gods I have followed long
Which rapt me and thrilled me and charmed me, but always have set me wrong,
For the gods I had placed before me, to worship in hope and adore,
Were pleasure and fame and fortune, in the midst of the world and its roar.

The coming of age and its wisdom, and the passage of youth so dear,
Have brought me a newer viewpoint that grows on me year by year;
And the gods I had placed before me, to worship in hope and adore,
Have faded into nothing, to rapture me nevermore.

So while the shadows grow longer, and age
 keeps a-coming on,
 My thoughts go wandering sadly to that
 realm where millions have gone,
Millions come up from the cradle to live their
 own lives just as I,
 To follow the gods set up from their youth, to
 find them false, and to die.

And out of it all in conclusion, in the dark and
 the quiet of night,
 The rarest thought that comes to me, that
 seems to give most light,
That brings me peace and quiet out of the dim
 and the gloom
 And takes the terror away at the thought of
 eternal doom,

Is one of love and of mercy, and good in the
 Maker of men,
 Who made us in form and in fashion, but
 lacking Divinity's ken;
And He and His will we must have for our God,
 to worship in hope, and adore,
 And the end it shall be a partnership, with
 Him on eternity's shore.

A FIRST LOVE

LAST night he held me to his breast
And whispered love to me,
While on my lips he gently prest
The sign of lover's glee.

My first and only, only love,
I wonder if he's true;
Will his spirit ever hover
Round me like the morning hue!

I could not help but think of him
And dream the whole night long;
And wonder if his love would dim,
Or cease its trancing song.

Though the world should crumble round me
And all things come to naught,
In his love I'll never fail to see
The comfort that I sought.

My love shall be unending,
And I know his is the same;
His love he'll ever keep anew
And to my heart lay claim.

Then love is life and meat to me,
A thing not of the past,
But like a lighthouse on the sea
Until our anchor's cast.

THE COIL OF THE SERPENT

IN the glow of youth's first fervor
I thought to mount the wall
That leads to glimmering glory,
For I heard the far famed call
Of genius beckoning me onward
To accomplish deeds of might
And shine through future ages
As a glowing star of light.

And straightway I went a-building
My temple of fame to the sky,
With the hope it would house me in glory
Before the hour came to die;
For I had been filled with ambition
To hear the applause of the world,
To be hailed as the leader of nations
Here where my spirit was hurled.

I set to work a-founding
My utopian temple of fame,
And labored with might and effort
To magnify my name;
Success was mine at the outset
And flushed with pride I went on
Up the mountain of glory
As others before me have gone.

My friends most eagerly sought me,
Encouraged me on to my best;
But asked me to champagne dinners
When my soul was longing for rest.
Their adulation and blarney
Worked in upon my soul
And deadened my ambitions
Before I had reached my goal.

Wine with its hypnotic power
Led me away from my work,
While woman fairly entranced me
And caused me my task to shirk;
Song kept me a-delaying
And hindered my daily toil,
While the hell-serpent kept tightening,
Tightening his deadly coil.

And how the years have fled from me!
O God, I am getting old
Without the realization
Of my youthful dreams so bold!
The darkness comes in upon me
And shrouds my soul in night,
While hope is fast receding
With my boyhood dreams so bright.

The hell-serpent's coil is tightening,
With his mighty bands I'm bound,
And his slimy convolutions
Keep a-circling me around.

The things which as a boy
I once had thought to do
Have faded into nothing
As this hellish power grew.

God alone can save me
From the weakness of my will,
And pour His soothing graces
On a wearied soul that's ill:
Then from these worldly meshes
To the God in heaven I turn,
For never was His mercy known
The penitent to spurn.

THE DESTROYERS

IN the dream of the day's reformer
The race shall be made again,
More fair and like the ideal
Of the sons and daughters of men.
And as we read their sounding cant,
Irreverent fancy hears
The joyless shout of the demagogue
And the rabble's rumbling jeers.

We ask with curious wonderings
If the reason of man has fled
To the brutish beast in the stubble field
Where flesh to flesh is wed.
The theories wild of the doctrinaires
Float in on the wings of night
To lead and tempt our troubled souls
Far away from the land of right.

Out of the East and out of the West
They send their shafts of blight,
By the printed page and the tongues of men
They would blast the rocks of right.
No hearth, no home, from their withering hand
Secure in life serene,
They mock at all the past has done,
They mock at the Nazarene.

They are teaching their doctrines everywhere,
At home and in the school;
They call themselves the leaders of men,
And build for all a rule.
I see the glint of their lurid flame
Flash out upon the night
From a thousand campfires far and wide,
Burning, burning bright.

Like a whirlwind they would sweep aside
Traditions of the past;
Nothing sacred, nothing divine,
While their frightful frenzies last:
Only time can stop their ravings
Just as the law of man
Reacts on their marshalled wisdom,
To revive as best it can.

They would write their unholy doctrines
In the statute books of our state,
And ask us with joy to receive them
Though we think them more worth our hate;
And if in thought, in word or deed
We dare from their dogmas depart,
Reactionaries they call us,
And laugh us to scorn in the mart.

Let us stand our ground and hold them fast
 With reason's rightful hand,
And hearken not to the whims and wiles
 Of these builders on the sand.
Let them laugh and scorn and flout if they will,
 Our doctrines and what we do,
But until they prove their scheme the best
 We'll stand by the tried and true.

ADVERSITY

LAST night I saw my little friend
All worn and wracked with pain,
And watched his smiles and tears ablend
As he welcomed me again.
I saw the beauty of his soul
Shine out in solemn splendor,
With mind still bent on heaven's goal,
So holy, sweet and tender.

His was the lot of suffering,
To pain and sorrow given;
He tolled it out as the offering
Of a soul from sin now shriven.
The wondrous feat of his self control
I could not help admire;
'Twas that of a soul still on patrol,
Awaiting his heart's desire.

And what was it that bore him up
In his body's grave distress,
To drink so deep of fate's grim cup
Without the least redress?
'Twas a heart well fixed on the further shore,
Where he knew he'd find relief
From the ill that comes as our mortal chore
To prove our real belief.

I read in his sad and lonely life
A lesson so brave and true
That well it might in a world of strife
Be given to those who do.
We only get the things worth while,
The things that count in the end,
If we meet our trial with pliant smile
And take what fate may send.

IN THE BEGINNING

IN the beginning He made them from nothing,
Molded and fashioned each planet and star;
They moving along in their orbits
Without the least friction or jar.
Out of the chaos He molded order;
In harmony ruled over all;
Till from the inanimate matter
Life came forth at His call.

Monarch of all creation,
Man was placed at the head,
Commissioned by the Creator
To rule the world in His stead;
Like unto even Jehovah
Molded and fashioned in form,
Guided by the Almighty
To meet and brave every storm.

Thou hadst made him free to act wrongly,
Free will was given to him;
And scarcely had he disobeyed Thee
When the light which shone round him grew
dim,—
Cast out from the garden of Eden,
Condemned to suffer and toil,
With blighted mind and will weakened,
Entwined by the hell-serpent's coil,

Till Thou in Thy goodness and wisdom
Sent Thine only begotten Son
To bring man back from his error,
That heaven again might be won.
And the price! My God, it was awful!
The picture will ever remain
While the thought of Thine infinite mercy
I shall ever and ever retain.

What more couldst Thou do for Thy creature!
Thyself Thou hast given to him.
Should not man, then, in deepest thanksgiving
Thy praise everlastingly hymn!
To know Thou art infinite goodness
Above and beyond human ken
Should of itself be sufficient
For the sons and the daughters of men.

Then let Thy grace always be with us,
While the fruit of Thy sacrificed Son
Will lead us, and wrap us, and thrill us
Till this pilgrimage here shall be done.
And when from Thy path we may wander,
With sin and abasement to roam,
Recall us! My God! Oh, recall us!
Lest we suffer the loss of our home.

THE TRIANGLE

AT the fiat of creation's Master, when first
upon this world I came,—
A quivering chunk of human flesh endowed with
soul immortal,
In matter made as animal unreasoning,
Molded and fashioned in form to likeness of the
Creator,—
I started down life's highway
Encouraged by the pæans of hosts of angels,
For did that power do no more in ages past or
yet to come
But bring me forth from out a land of nothing-
ness,—
A spirit that shall never die, caged in flesh
ephemeral,—
'Twere proof enough that He were power om-
nipotent.

All the court of heaven were there in num-
bers countless ;
Legion upon legion of angels and arch-angels,
Thrones and dominations, virtues, principal-
ties and powers,
Cherubim and seraphim, together with the hosts
of sainted dead,
All in one mighty voice they bade me Godspeed.
And so from out the eternal shores I came
Trailing clouds of glory fresh from God.

The babbling babe becomes a child, the sweet-
est age of all
In man's short, fleeting span of life.
O happy childish innocence! That thou
couldst persevere
Within the human heart unto the end!
Then what a joy and happiness secure our little
part would be
Upon this stage, the world, where actors come
and go,
And shall, to the last syllable of recorded time;
But no! The all-wise Creator has decreed it
sha'n't be so,
For He would have us tried in conflict with the
spirit of evil
And prove our worth and merit, receiving from
His gracious hands
Life eternal in the kingdom of perpetual light.

So in the course of law divine, childish inno-
cence,
Together with the guileless blush of youth, must
fade away
And lose itself within the twilight zone of hazy
memory,
Leaving behind faint traces as a binding chain
To hold us in the ranks when battles rage, and
Rôle of victor seems so far away;
The child becomes a man.

Last age of all and greatest,
Traversing life's triangle majestically we move
From point to point, mere instants in duration
With reference to before and after.
And so it goes, the three angles of life,
Infancy, Childhood, then the Age of Might,
When one must do or leave undone
The task prescribed from the eternal throne.

See then, O lonely Pilgrim, since 'tis given to
thee
To wend thy way along this vale of life,
Thou buidest well and strong,
Not on the fleeting sands of ever changing time,
Lest storms of passion come and wash away;
But rather build thou high and firm
Upon the mighty rock of faith,
And let thy structure be full ribbed with will of
iron.
So bear up, move along, however dark the prospect!
For 'tis written that hope shall lead thee
And charity smooth the way
As over this mysterious, yea, marvellous triangle
Thou dost move,
Until the Figure be completed, and thou take
Thy chamber in the silent halls of death.

WHAT THINKEST THOU?

ART thou born to live on earth,
Seeking only joy and mirth,
Spend thy years in game and song
Where thou canst not tarry long?
— Is thy talent given to spend,
Not where paths of duty blend,
But amid the “madding crowd”
Where the lofty and the proud
Sear their souls with noise and din
Of a world so steeped in sin?
What thinkest thou?

Is it best to spend thy years
Laughing in a vale of tears,
Jesting much where millions weep,
From the toil of others reap
What *thou* shouldst have really earned
When thy heart with passion burned
For the gods of brick and stone,
Seeking fortune for thy own? —
Should things passing be thy end,
And thou to gods of matter bend?
What thinkest thou?

Wert thou made to mass up wealth,
Sacrificing even health
For the scarce but gaudy gold,
Seeking it till thou art old,
Wanting fortune for thine own,
And of all the world alone
Place thy hope in things of earth —
Some forbidden from thy birth —
Till the fates will end it all
And shall come thy judgment call?
What thinkest thou?

Is there nothing else in life
Thou canst find amidst the strife
On our little stage,— the world
Where man's craving soul was hurled
To battle for the truth and right
Until the closing in of night,
When hated death must end it all
And thou shalt hear the judgment call?
— Hast thou ever nothing done
To save thee when thy course is run?
What thinkest thou?

MEDITATION

I SAT me down beside a stream, lonely and dis-
consolate,
For I had come from the land of those I love
Into a strange country afar
To seek my fortune.
Unknown faces and new,
Strange tongues, and customs odd,
Affected me and made me long for my native
land.
Impressed with my own insignificance
By this newer knowledge of the wideness of the
world,
Almost bent to despair, I, who once had been so
self-opinionated,
Came to this running stream
For consolation from nature.

And in the running stream, the sigh of breeze,
and song of bird,
The hills outlined against a sky of blue,
The sun now wading deep through rifts of cloud,
Bursting forth anew to send his piercing shafts
of light
And gild some lonely dell, or cast a halo round
some peasant's hut,
The jangling cowbells in the pasture near,
And bark of farmer's dog,—
All this and more

Did sing to me a soothing melody
The like of which no master ever drew
From strings of harp or cast in words of speech
Or threw with brush and colors on a canvas
 stretched,
For it was weft of Him, the Arch-Master of
 them all,
Who merely paint or sing or play in semblance
of His work.

God! Only Thine own ideal could have been
A model for such a wondrous work of genius
As we, Thy creatures, see around about us,
But seldom 'preciate, so rapt we are
In selfish gain and lust.
'Twas in this mighty master-work of Thine
I learned a lesson deep for words to tell.

Fool! That thou shouldst yearn and pine
For scenes of old,
And friends that once were thine,
When all the world's ablaze with glory,—
Glory of the dawn and sunset,
The picturesque, the beautiful, and grand,
Portrayed all in nature's studio
For thee, the connoisseur who shall be,
If thou wouldst but cast from off thine eyes
The glasses colored by thine own infirmity of
 soul.

Nature in whatever phase
Is never sad or grieving,
But only the contents of thy mind do make
 it so,
And thou must reconstruct thy thought
To the plans of nature and of nature's God,
And follow down the course decreed for thee
From out eternal shores,
As steady to the law as nature's forces move,
And peace thine own shall be.







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